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CASA of San Benito County 2019/2020 County of San Benito Grant Report

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Goals & Expectations

CASA of San Benito County received a grant from the County of San Benito to provide child advocates for foster children from San Benito County who are referred and appointed by the courts. CASA serves children who have been abused, abandoned and/or neglected and are now in the Dependency System of the courts. The funding from the County supports advocacy services for foster children from San Benito County by recruiting and training community members to become child advocates. Once advocates are trained, they are then assigned to a foster child from our community. They advocate for the child's best interest in the courtroom, classroom and the community, ensuring their needs are met while in foster care.

The CASA program serves children and youth ages 0 to 21. The CASA program focuses on the overall well-being of the child; development, milestones, timely referrals to services and resources, education, safety and permanency.

Outcomes

From July 2019 through June 2020, the CASA program added 6 new advocates and served 33 foster children from infants/toddlers to young adults up to age 21. More than 42% of the children served were placed in out-of-county foster placements for part of the time or the entirety of the duration in foster care. Placing foster children outside of our county continues to be problematic. Additionally, providing advocacy services during the COVID-19 pandemic is challenging. However, CASA of San Benito County found ways to continue connecting with foster children and supporting advocates through creativity and thinking out-of-the-box.

Ages of children served:

Birth to 5 = 6

Age 6 to 11 = 7

Age 12 to 15 = 10

Age 16 to 17 = 4

Age 18 to 21 = 6

The CASA program continues to serve, support and be a voice for foster children from San Benito County, it is the only program in the community dedicated to advocate for children in the foster care system.